

Friends of Nukus Museum

Quarterly Newsletter No. 1

June 21, 2007

Dear Friends of Nukus Museum:

With greetings from Washington, D.C. (David Pearce), Istanbul (Kees Kramer), and The Hague (Thymen Kouwenaar)_and especially from Nukus (Marinika Babanazarova and colleagues)_we all hope that this first quarterly newsletter of the revived Friends of Nukus Museum (FoNM) finds you and yours well, and also looking forward to a fine mid-summer holiday season. With regrets for our inability to stick to the FoNM re-launch timetable foreseen in our invitation letters earlier this year, we hope nevertheless that you http://www.nha.co.uk/company_info/contact.htm will be pleased with the progress noted below and that you will enjoy the other news and views reported elsewhere in this newsletter and its attachments.

A. Friends of Nukus Museum Foundation

2. **First**, thanks to the sterling efforts of Kees, Thymen and legal colleagues in The Netherlands, a non-profit foundation_ ***Friends of Nukus Museum***_was formally established on March 23, 2007 under Dutch law and registered on April 13, 2007. Attachments 1 and 2 to this letter are respectively: a translated copy of the relevant extract from the Amsterdam Chamber of Commerce's business registry; and, a brief summary of the foundation's articles of incorporation, which are in substance very similar to those of the erstwhile non-governmental organization registered in Karakalpakstan in 2001. Kindly note that, for reasons of legal and practical convenience, Kees, Thymen and I are listed as the FoNM's Board_ initially for 2007_ and also that Kees' home address in Bennebroek, The Netherlands is, for the time being, the FoNM's temporary legal address. In this latter connection, although a more permanent address or post-box may become appropriate later, we expect most if not all FoNM communications to be electronic. Meanwhile, and more importantly, we would appreciate hearing from FoNM members able and willing: (a) to volunteer for two additional Board positions provided for in the foundation's statute; and (b) to act as alternates or deputies for all five Board positions (initially for the remainder of 2007 but also for 2008 as well). In addition, by the end of 2007, we plan to invite an initial, geographically representative group of 7-9 eminent persons to serve as members of the proposed FoNM Advisory Council; and, members' nominations and recommendations for membership of this Council are welcomed.

3. **Second**, with Thymen's help, a bank account in the name of the ***Friends of Nukus Museum*** was opened on May 11 at the ABN-AMRO Bank. The FoNM account number is: **58.15.57.352**; and, the ABN-AMRO Bank branch address is: Bezuidenhoutseweg 33, 2594 AC The Hague, The Netherlands. As indicated in our invitation letters earlier this year, we

recommend, and very much hope that all members can commit to an annual individual/family membership contribution of US\$100 or equivalent of which \$90 will be made available directly to the Museum in cash or in kind as a token of the FoNM's support for conservation, cultural, educational, outreach, research and other activities or projects agreed annually with the Curator/Director. The remaining \$10, for the first 1-2 years at least, will be retained by the FoNM to cover essential administrative expenses, bank maintenance charges, and the design and initial maintenance of a new FoNM web page although we expect that most, if not all FoNM membership-related activities at the outset will be provided on a voluntary, *pro bono* basis. In return for this annual contribution, FoNM members will receive: (a) an annual membership card; (b) a quarterly FoNM newsletter (June, September, December, March), which will include (commencing September 2007) a personal column "*News from Nukus*" by Marinika Babanazarova; and (c) free entry to the Museum. In addition, members will have the satisfaction of making a small but tangible contribution to the continuation and maintenance of the Museum's cultural treasures. Over time, if we are successful in increasing the FoNM's individual membership and, in particular, in mobilizing a modest base of corporate and/or institutional support, we hope it will be possible to contemplate more ambitious activities and a higher level of FoNM support.

4. **Third**, in this context, Attachment 3 to this letter provides a list of the 44 old and new FoNM members who responded to our invitation letters dated December 18, 2006 and January 5 and 24, 2007. We expect that you, like us, will view this list as the first draft of a potentially much larger network of alumni, business people, development professionals, diplomats, students and/or scholars with interests in, and experience of Nukus, Karakalpakstan, Uzbekistan and Central Asia in general and thus, of potential members of the FoNM. Accordingly, with the FoNM now formally re-established, Kees, Thymen and I have resolved to try to increase its membership to 100 by the end of 2007 an ambitious goal, but one that, with your advice, contacts, and help especially as regards up-to-date email addresses of former members we believe is quite feasible. This would also enable an increase in annual FoNM support to the Museum from about \$4,000 at present to over \$9,000.

B. Recent Development & News from Nukus

5. En route back to the United States from a recent working visit to Bishkek, I was fortunate to be able to make a 4-day personal stopover in Uzbekistan, including a 2-day trip to Nukus, May 30-31. My purpose, in addition to the renewed pleasure of visiting the Museum once again, was to discuss with Marinika Babanazarova and her colleagues how a revived, albeit a now globally dispersed and "virtual" FoNM might best re-engage with, and support the Museum. On June 1, I also met with Professor Kuziev, Chairman, Uzbekistan Academy of Arts a member and patron of the old FoNM as well as a few Tashkent-based members of the FoNM.

6. In Nukus, we obviously covered a wide range of news, views, and issues some of which will feature in, and help to define a short- and medium-term strategy for the FoNM's development later this year. For the time being, therefore, herewith a brief summary of the main highlights, including tentatively agreed priorities for potential FoNM support direct or indirect during the next 12-18 months (2007-08).

- Following a May14-15 OSCE environmental conference in Vienna_for which the Uzbekistan Embassy requested the Museum to arrange a presentation which, owing to the very short notice, proved impossible_there is apparently renewed interest by the Austrian/Viennese cultural authorities in an exhibition. On the other hand, the exhibition planned for 2007 in Groningen, The Netherlands, has been postponed indefinitely_an unfortunate (and innocent) casualty of the European Union’s post-Andijan sanctions régime against Uzbekistan.
- The \$70,000 Christensen Foundation/British Council/UNESCO-financed restoration project undertaken by *Restaurateurs sans Frontières*¹ (RSF) during 2004-05 has now been completed; and, RSF, now active elsewhere in Uzbekistan with government financing, is seeking additional sponsorship for continued work in Nukus. Following Marinika’s 2006 visit to Los Angeles, the Museum very recently submitted a \$25,000 proposal to the Getty Foundation which, if successful, may permit resumption of RSF-assisted restoration activities possibly in October, 2007. Restoration of the Savitsky collection_ultimately a decades-long work-in-progress_obviously remains the Museum’s highest priority.
- The British Council-financed “*Museum on Wheels*”² cultural education outreach project_which takes works of art to schools in rural areas where children and young people have the opportunity to learn about art history and their rich cultural (Karakalpak) heritage for the first time_is scheduled to end in December 2007. Swiss (SECO) financing may be possible, but is not yet certain. This project, which in its basic model or design reportedly costs about \$3,000 monthly, is a high priority for the Museum, culturally and politically, in Karakalpakstan overall and also a candidate for direct FoNM support.
- Following the recently opened exhibition of Zhukaev paintings (through September 2007), the Museum will host an important exhibition related to the *Khorezm Archeological and Ethnographical Expedition*. The latter coincides with a major international archeological and ethnographical conference to be held in Nukus from October 2-4, 2007 to mark the centennial of the birth of Sergei Tolstov, the Founding Director of the Expedition (of which Igor Savitsky was a member commencing 1950). The exhibition is planned to continue through December, 2007, and possibly through March 2008.
- The planned *biography of Igor Savitsky*, under preparation by Marinika Babanazarova and Museum staff for several years, is now about 80% complete but still needs about \$7,000 equivalent to finance remaining field

¹ Further details may be found on the RSF’s website: www.rsfturkey.org

² Further details may be found on the British Council’s website: www.britishcouncil.org/uzbekistan

research and archive work in Kiev, Nice and Moscow. Gallimard, a French publisher, is reportedly interested in publishing. This project may also be

- considered a priority for possible direct FoNM support. For example, when complete, translation of the text from Russian into (e.g.) English and French may be arranged (informally and voluntarily) through the FoNM's membership/network.
- Similarly, translation, from French into English, of the catalog prepared for the 1998 exhibition of Savitsky collection paintings in Caen, France (either wholly or only certain essays/articles), may also be a priority for direct FoNM support through its membership/network
- Finally, Museum dissemination activities reportedly under consideration or preparation include feature articles in the new "Steppe" magazine and in Central Asia "Discovery" publications as well as an hour-long BBC documentary.

7. In Tashkent, I visited with Professor Kuziev, who warmly welcomed the revival of the FoNM. He expressed the hope that, in time, the FoNM could become as well known and supportive as the Friends of the Hermitage Museum (!), which celebrated its 10th Anniversary last November and which, in addition to an impressive list of Russian and international corporate sponsors, also boasts national affiliates in Canada, The Netherlands, and the United Kingdom³. We also agreed that Professor Kuziev may provide material for an Academy of Arts column or paragraph of news in the FoNM Quarterly Newsletter.

C. Next Steps

8. The purpose of this first FoNM Quarterly Newsletter, including its attachments, has been: first, to brief members about the recent institutional renaissance of the FoNM and to re-confirm their commitment; and second, to share recent news and views from the Museum itself.

9. Against this background, immediate priorities and next steps during the coming weeks include: *first*, several mundane but important matters such as the design of updated/improved FoNM letterheads, newsletter formats and FoNM membership cards; *second*, the collection of FoNM membership contributions for the first year (July 1-2007-June 30,2008); *third*, the design and set up of a FoNM website_which, given the now global dispersion of the FoNM membership and network, assumes a much greater importance than before for membership communications, discussion, etc; *fourth*, follow up on the issues discussed in paragraph 6 above; and *fifth*, not least important, the recruitment of additional individual FoNM members (hopefully 100 by end-2007) and an assessment of prospects for corporate and institutional support for specific FoNM/Museum projects. In addition, options for the FoNM's short- and medium-term institutional development strategy will feature in the 2nd Quarterly Newsletter in

³ Further details may be found on the Hermitage Museum's website: www.hermitagemuseum.org

September_for subsequent “virtual” discussion among FoNM members during the fall and for finalization by end-2007.

10. We look forward to receiving your comments, questions, and general feedback on any or all of the above_at the electronic email addresses noted below_and, in particular, any ideas or initiatives you may have to help make this new FoNM become an internationally sustainable effort and reality.

With greetings and best wishes to you all for an enjoyable summer holiday season.

Yours truly,

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Attachments

1. FoNM registration document
2. FoNM – Summary Statement of Purpose
3. List of FoNM Members (as of June 15, 2007) at the electronic email addresses noted below

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